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ONTARIO GOVERNMENT REDUCING HEALTH CARE WAIT TIMES

New Wait Time Data Shows Double-Digit Drops in the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Area

TORONTO – New data shows the Ontario government's Wait Time Strategy is resulting in decreases in wait times for key health services in the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) area, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Trends in the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN area are encouraging with significant decreases in wait times for a number of key health services," Smitherman said. "Through the leadership and hard work of thousands of front line health professionals, the Wait Time Strategy is clearly achieving real results for patients by improving access to care, closer to home."

As a result of the government's Wait Time Strategy, wait times in which nine out of 10 patients have completed their surgery or have had their exam in the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN area have decreased significantly since August/September 2005 by:

- 84.0 per cent for angiography (74 days)
- 71.9 per cent for angioplasty (41 days)
- 41.8 per cent for hip replacement (174 days)
- 36.7 per cent for CT scans (29 days)
- 28.2 per cent for knee replacement (127 days)
- 26.0 per cent for cataract surgery (66 days)
- 18.5 per cent for MRI scans (23 days)
- 11.0 per cent for cardiac bypass surgery (five days).

Since the launch of the Wait Time Strategy, the Ontario government has invested $108,701,472 for additional procedures in hospitals in the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN area, including:

- 10,857 cataract surgeries ($7,962,400)
- 15,326 cardiac procedures ($31,678,936)
- 5,254 hip and knee joint replacements ($45,401,514)
- 2,330 cancer surgeries ($15,019,822)
- 22,964 hours, 34,446 exams MRI ($7,660,600)
- 3,912 hours, 13,692 exams CT ($978,200).

The new wait time data is available at www.ontariowaittimes.com, which is closing in on nearly 4 million hits as of today.

"Residents in the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN, including Burlington and most of Norfolk, are experiencing much shorter wait times for cardiac care, hip and knee replacement, cataract surgery

and CT scans. As well, we are beginning to see some improved access to cancer care and MRI scans despite excellent performance in cancer care already," said Juanita Gledhill, Chair of the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN. "We are delighted that all hospitals and the CCAC continue to work together and with the LHIN to improve access and health outcomes across the LHIN."

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait time and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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